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SUBJECT: S/GWI PROJECT PROPOSAL: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REF: STATE 132094

11. SUMMARY Per reftel, U.S. Embassy Port of Spain has identified Credo Foundation's Sophia House for the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues' Small Grants Initiative. END SUMMARY

12. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Credo Foundation operates Sophia House Center for the Empowerment of Young Girls at Risk, a shelter for homeless at risk young women. Sophia House offers young women and girls increased access to education, removal from domestic violence and sexual exploitation, and economic opportunities through mentoring and vocational training.

13. PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

With this grant we would help Sofia House 1) establish new counseling services through art therapy, 2) provide educational services through school transportation, civics-based field trips, and computers and exercise equipment at youth and homeless centers, and 3) vocational training through sewing machines and other materials.

Sofia House offers temporary emergency as well as long-term accommodation to young girls at risk. When the center opened in 2004 there was no other facility offering similar services to young women in Trinidad and Tobago. Facilities for homeless and troubled young women in Trinidad are currently unable to meet the demands of the population.

Residents of Sophia House are typically young girls living on the streets and participating in abusive and degrading relationships. Many are young mothers lacking knowledge of healthy parenting practices.

Sophia House provides young women and girls with economic alternatives to homelessness and prostitution. The center facilitates education, training and personal development for residents; to empower families and to facilitate family reintegration where possible. The center also offers developmental programs, opportunities to complete school, remedial programs to assist in preparing to return to school, job training, counseling and therapy, and parenting skills.

14. PROJECT ACTIVITY AND DESCRIPTION

1A. Establish an Art Therapist Position. Residents are frequently victims of traumatic experiences and would benefit from weekly art therapy to process past experiences and recover emotionally.

1B. OrGANIZE A SERIES OF Know-Your-Country Field Trips for residents who have not traveled outside of their home neighborhoods. These trips would expose residents to the natural beauty and civic history of Trinidad and encourage pride in their country.

1C. Educational/VOCATIONAL EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS. We would fund the purchase of computers, vocational training materials, and exercise equipment for residents. Residents will learn to sew and complete minor garment repairs.

1D. Transportation. Subsidize transportation from shelters to enable residents to complete of school. Additionally, Sophia House staff must travel to the homes of former residents who were

reunited with family to evaluate their continued safety and development.

1E. SPECIFIC THERAPY. Three young women have been identified for specialized Psycho/Educational testing. Sophia House would like to hire a therapist to meet regularly with them to assess their current capabilities and help them to improve their mental health and educational achievements.

15. DESIRED OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Sophia House works to encourage self reliance in each of their residents as well as an ability and desire to develop into responsible and caring citizens. Sophia House conducts internal program evaluations on a quarterly basis using the following indicators: participation in developmental programs, re-integration into the education system, ability to live successfully outside of Sophia House. The center's staff is required to report on progress to Management and the board every quarter. We would expect to receive the same reports.

Successes achieved during 2009 include four high school graduates, three former residents living on their own and supporting themselves, eight former residents reunited with their families, and one resident is now a successful seamstress.

16. TOTAL BUDGET in U.S. Dollars: \$29,802

-- Computers, desks, and printers: \$4,700

-- Sewing Machines: \$792

-- Exerciser: \$800

-- Psycho/Educational Testing: \$6,000

-- Art Therapist & materials: \$10,000

-- Know your Country Field Trips: \$460
-- School/Home Travel: \$2,800
-- Educational Materials: \$3,000
-- Parent Empowerment: \$800
-- Past Residents: \$450

17. ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The Credo Foundation for Justice (CFJ) was founded in 1993 by the Holy Faith Sisters to address social injustices against youth.

Following a needs analysis, CFJ began work with children on the streets in 1994 and subsequently opened three centers: Credo Drop-In & Development Centre in 1997, Aylward Transitional Facility in 2000, and Sophia House for the empowerment of young girls at risk in 2004.

CFJ works with children who live and work on the streets or in other abusive situations. CFJ's three centers provide a safe home, and mentoring to develop the personal, social and educational skills needed to transition to a healthy lifestyle. CFJ strives to positively impact individual lives as well as Trinidadian society by addressing the systemic problems of homelessness, crime and violence.

Although CFJ centers are located in Port of Spain, residents come from all areas of Trinidad & Tobago as well as other Caribbean

islands. CFJ accepts all residents irrespective of race, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability or socio-economic status. The majority residents are between the ages of 7 and 21. There are usually 35-40 in residence with others dropping in.

18. GRANT MANAGEMENT

The Political-Economic Section will manage the grant through the Political Officer and Political Assistant. Services offered by Sophia House compliment the drug demand reduction foreign assistance efforts of Post's INL program.
Kusnitz